

The BRONZE BELL

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SYNOPSIS.

David Amber, starting for a quick-shooting visit with his friend, Quain, comes upon a young lady, equestrian who has been dismounted by her horse becoming frightened at the sudden appearance in the road of a burly Hindu. He declares he is Bahari, and Quain, the appointed mouthpiece of the Bell, addresses Amber as a man of high rank and pressing a mysterious little bronze bowl to his forehead, into his hand, disappears in the wood. The girl calls Amber by name. He in turn addresses her as Miss Sophie, daughter of Col. Farrell of the British diplomatic service in India and visiting the Quain home in England. The Quain home is burglarized and the bronze bowl stolen. Amber and Quain go hunting on an island and become lost and alone. Finally, Amber and Quain are recognized as its occupant an old friend named Rutton, whom he last met in England, and who appears to be in hiding. When Miss Farrell is mentioned Rutton is strangely agitated. Chatterbox and summons Rutton to a meeting of a mysterious body. Rutton seizes a revolver and dashes after Chatterbox. He returns wildly excited, says he has killed the Hindu, takes poison, and when dying asks Amber to go to India on a mysterious errand. Amber decides to leave at once for India. On the way he sends a letter to Mr. Labertouche, a friend in Calcutta, by a quicker route. Upon arriving he finds a man who tells him. It directs Amber to meet his friend at a certain place. The latter tells him he knows his mission is to get Miss Farrell out of the country. Amber attempts to dispose of the token to a money-lender, is mistaken for Rutton and barely escapes being mobbed. A message from Labertouche causes him to start for Darjeeling; on the way he meets Miss Farrell, and at their journey's end asks her to become his wife. A Hindu conducts Amber to a secret place, and in the presence of a beautiful woman who mistakes him for Rutton, Amber is drugged. The Hindu plot revealed, and at Labertouche's instigation Amber returns to the woman, Naraini, to discover the secret of the conspiracy. He learns they would make him their king.

CHAPTER XVIII. (Continued).

Again he failed to answer. Somewhere near him he heard a slight noise as of a man moving impatiently; and then a whisper: "Respond, thou fool!"

"Art thou come, O chosen of the Gateway?" the bell-voice rang.

"I . . . I am come," Amber managed to reply.

"Hear ye!" rang the bell. "Hear ye, O lords and rulers in Medhyama! O children of my Gateway, hear ye well! He is come! He stands upon the threshold of the Gateway."

A great drum roared like the crack of doom; and Amber's jaw dropped. For in the high roof of the temple a silken slab had been noiselessly withdrawn, and through it a cold shaft of moonlight fell, cutting the gloom like a gigantic rapier, and smoke with its immaculate radiance the true Gateway of Swords.

Not six paces from him it leaped out of the darkness in an iridescent sheen; an arch a scant ten feet in height, and in span double the width of a big man's shoulders, woven across like a weaver's frame with ribbons of pale fire. But the ribbons were of steel—steel blades, sharp, bright, gleaming. With their pommels cunningly affixed so that their points touched and interlaced, yet swung free, they lined the piers of the arch from base to span and all the graceful sweep of the intrados, a curtain of shimmering, trembling steel, barring the way to the mystery beyond. Which was—darkness.

"O ye swords!" belled the voice. "O ye swords that have known no dishonor! O ye swords that have sung in the grasp of my greatest! Swords of Jehangir, Akbar, Alamgir! Swords of Alludin, Humayun, Shah Jehan! Swords of Timur-Leng, Arungzeb, Rao Rutton!"

The invocation seemed interminable. Amber recognized almost every name noted in the annals and legends of Hindustan.

"Hearken, O my swords! He, thy chosen, prayeth for entry! What is thy welcome?"

One by one the blades began to shiver, clashing their neighbors, until the curtain of steel glimmered and glistened like phosphorescence in a summer sea, and the place was filled with the music of their contact; and through their clamor boomed the bell: "O my chosen! Amber started and held himself firmly in hand. "Look well, look well! Here is thy portal to kingship and glory!"

He frowned and took a step forward as if he would thrust himself through the archway; for he had suddenly remembered with compelling vividness that Sophia Farrell was to be won only by that passage. But as he moved the swords clattered afresh and swung outward, presenting a bristling point. And he stopped, while the voice, indifferent and remote as always, continued to harangue him: "If thy heart, O my chosen, be clean, unsullied with fear and guile; if thy faith be the faith of thy fathers and thy honor rooted in love of thy land; if thou hast faith in the strength of thy hands to hold the reins of empire . . . enter, having no fear."

"Trick-work," he told himself. He set his teeth with determination. "Hope they don't see fit to cut me to pieces on suspicion. Here goes." He moved forward with a firm step until his bosom all but touched the points. Instantaneously, with another clash as of cymbals, the blades were deflected and returned to their first position, closing the arch. He hesitated. Then, "That shan't stop me!" he said through his teeth, and pushed forward, heart in mouth. He breathed the curtain and felt it alive; the blades yielded

craven; the scarlet evil dismayed them; they fled from his power and left it to batten on me in my sickness."

A deep groan welled in uncounted throats and resounded through the cavern.

"Will ye fall me again, O my children?"

"Nay, nay, O our mother!"

"Too long have I suffered and been patient in silence. Now I must be cleansed and made whole as of old time; yes, I must be purged altogether and the evil cast out from me. It is time. . . . Ye have heard, ye have answered; make ready, for the day of the cleansing approacheth. Whet thy swords for the days of the healing, for my cleansing can be but by steel. Yes, thy swords shall do away with the evil, and the land shall run red with the blood of Bharuta, the blood of thy mother; it shall run to the Red Sea as a river, bearing with it the evil. So and no otherwise shall I, thine old mother, be healed and made whole again."

Amber was watching the serpent-dazed and weary as if with a great need of sleep. Even the salvos of shouts came to him as from a great distance. To the clangor of the bell alone he had become abnormally sensitive; every fiber of his being shuddered, responsive to its weird nuances. It returned to its solemn and stately intoning.

"Out of ye all have I chosen and fixed upon one who shall lead ye. Through his shall my strength be made manifest, my will be made known to my peoples. His must ye serve and obey; to him must ye bow down and be humble. Say, are ye pleased? Will ye have him, my children?"

Without an instant's delay a cry of ratification rang to the roof. "Yes, O our mother! him we will serve and obey, to him bow down and be humble."

The voice addressed itself directly to the kneeling man. He stiffened and roused.

"Thou hast heard of the honor we confer upon thee—I Medhyama, thy

mother, and these thy children, thy brothers. Ye shall lead and rule in Bharuta. Are ye ready?"

Half hypnotized, Amber opened his mouth, but no words came. His chin dropped to his breast.

"Thy strength must be known to my peoples; they must see thee put to the proof thy courage, that they may know thee to be the man for their. . . . Ye are ready?"

He was unable to move a finger. "Stretch out thine arms!"

He shuddered and tried to obey. The voice rang imperative.

"Stretch forth thine arms for the testing!"

Somehow, mechanically, he succeeded in raising his arms and holding them rigid before him. Alarmed by the movement, the cobra turned with a hiss, waving his poisonous head. But the Virginian made no offer to withdraw his hands. His eyes were wide and staring and his face livid.

A subdued murmur came from the men clustered round the idols, in semi-darkness.

The bell boomed forth like an organ. "O hooded death. . . . O death, who art trained to my service! Thou before whom all men stand affrighted! Thou who canst look into their hearts and read them as a scroll that is unrolled. . . . Look deep into the heart of my chosen! Judge if he be worthy or wanting; judge if he be false or true. . . . Judge him, O death!"

Before Amber the great serpent was oscillating like a pendulum, his little tongue playing like forked red lightning, his loathsome red eyes holding his own.

"Look well, O death, and judge him!"

The dance of the hooded death changed in character, grew more frenzied; the white writhing coils melted into one another in dizzying confusion; hazy mazes into hazy like smoke.

ing it around promiscuously.

When asked the other day by the detectives how the scheme was worked, one of the counterfeiters told the detective.

"Opium, you know," he began, "is generally sold at night. Neither we nor the ones who sell it to us are taking any chances, so when we buy it the transfer of course is completed as quickly as possible. I have bought lots of the drug with phony money and I never yet saw the Chinese count it, and you can be sure I never

The suspense grew intense.

"Hast thou judged him, O death?"

Instantly the white cobra reared up to its utmost and remained poised over Amber, barely moving save for the almost imperceptible throbbing of the hood and the incessant darting of the forked tongue.

"If he be loyal, then spare him."

The hood did not move. Amber's flesh crawled with unspeakable dread. "If he be faithless, then . . . strike!"

For another moment the cobra maintained the tensity. Then slowly, cruel head waving, hood shrinking, eyes losing their deathly luster, coil by coil it sank.

A thick murmur ran the round of the walls, swelling into an inarticulate cry, which beat upon Amber's ears like the raving of a far-off surf. From his lips a strangled sob broke, and, every muscle relaxing, he lurched forward.

Alarmed, in a trice the cobra was up again, hood distending to the bursting point, head swinging so swiftly that the eye could not follow it. In another breath would come the final thrust.

A scream exploded behind Amber, singing his cheek with its flame. He fell over sideways, barely escaping the head of the cobra, which, with its hood blown to tatters, writhed in convulsions, its malignant tongue straining forth as if in one last attempt to reach his hand.

A second shot followed the first and then a brisk, confused fusillade. Amber heard a man scream out in mortal agony, and the dull sound of a heavy body falling near him; but, coincident with the second report, the brazer had been overturned and its light extinguished as if sucked up into the air.

CHAPTER XIX.

Rutton's Daughter.

In darkness the blacker for the sudden disappearance of the light, some body stumbled over Amber—stumbled and swore in good English. The Virginian sat up, crying out as weakly as a child: "Labertouche!" A voice said:

"You would!" he cried, and threw her from him, putting a foot upon the pistol.

She reeled back against the wall and crouched there, trembling, her cheeks on fire, her eyes aflame with rage. "You dog!" she shrielled in Hindi—and spat at him like a maddened cat. Then he recognized her.

"Naraini!" He stepped back in his surprise, his right hand seeking instinctively the wrist of his left, which was numb with pain.

His change of position left the pistol unguarded, and the woman swooped down upon it like a bird of prey; but before she could get her fingers on its grip, Labertouche stepped between them, fended her off, and quietly possessed himself of the weapon.

"Your pardon, madam," he said, gravely.

Naraini retorted, shaking with fury, and Amber employed the respite to recognize Sophia Farrell in the woman on the charpoy. She was still seated, prevented from rising by bonds about her wrists and ankles, and though unnaturally pale, her anguish of fear and despair had set its marks upon her face without one whit detracting from the appeal of her beauty. He went to her immediately, and as their eyes met, hers flamed with joy, relief and he dared believe—a stronger emotion.

"You—you're not hurt, Mr. Amber?"

"Not at all. The bullet went out through my sleeve. And you?"

He dropped on his knees, with his pocket-knife severing the ends of rope that bound her.

"I'm all right." She took his hands, helping herself to rise. "Thank you," she said, her eyes shining, a flush of color suffusing her face with glory.

"Did you cut those ropes, Amber?" Labertouche interposed curtly.

"Yes, Why?"

The Englishman explained without turning from his sombre and morose regard on Naraini. "Too bad—we'll have to tie this woman up, somehow. She's a complication I hadn't foreseen. . . . Here; you'd better leave me to attend to her—you and Miss Farrell. Go on down the gallery—to the left. I'll catch up with you."

The pistol which he still held lent to his demand a sinister significance of which he was, perhaps, thoughtful. But Sophia Farrell heard, saw and surmised.

"No!" she cried, going swiftly to the secret agent. "No!" She put a hand upon his arm, but he shook it off.

"Did you hear me, Amber?" said Labertouche, still watching the queen.

"What do you mean to do?" insisted Sophia. "You can't—you mustn't!"

"This is no time for half-measures, Miss Farrell," Labertouche told her brusquely. "Our lives hang in the balance—Mr. Amber's, yours, mine. Please go."

WILL FAIL OF EFFECT

PROTEST OF STEEL CORPORATION IS ABSURD.

Workmen Have Not Been Benefitted, but the Reverse, by the Operations of the Giant Company—Figures Prove It.

Mr. Gary, of the United States Steel corporation, is a wonderful business executive, as also is Mr. Carnegie, but at times both make some exceedingly true utterances. Subsequent to the suit against the corporation Mr. Gary was quoted:

"If any harm results, it will fall upon the stockholders and employees, aggregating a very large number, and any loss to them must be deplored."

Neither was it especially original in Mr. Carnegie to express solicitation for the stockholders when the even tenor of \$28 rails and 90 per cent of the steel trade generally was disturbed. Truism considered for stockholder and employee has long been a clause in the trust's decalogue.

Hence the criticism of these gentlemen's comments as trite. Somehow or other this worry over what will happen to the employee vaguely reminds us of the familiar schoolboy, "Let us alone," which was last expressed by Mr. Morgan's man, Perkins, in his Big Business speech at Detroit.

But to return to Mr. Gary. In the one sentence quoted may be found the kernel of the nation's protests against the trusts and the tariff from which they have sprung. Shifting the blame, shifting the burden, shifting the loss—these are familiar enough to require no comment. Each time the tariff has been threatened or an effort made to enforce the Sherman law, the placard—"remember the workman!"—has been held up in warning. It is of close kin to the Standard Oil fines of several years ago, when retail prices were raised in keeping with the court's sentence. It ranks with the American Tobacco company's solution of the Spanish-American war tax—a reduction in the size of the packages, which size has never been restored.

And the tariff, surely, by this same reasoning, is for the benefit of the workmen—for the trusts' employees especially; that is why the trusts have clung so tenaciously to the good old standard schedules. That the trusts themselves prospered was, of course, merely incidental. Now comes the employee as the great sufferer by trust dissolution. The United States Steel corporation points to its system of profit sharing and pensioning, to its beneficent treatment of the thousands on its pay roll. Yet in this connection we recall the findings of the so-called Pittsburgh Survey, published last May by the Russell Sage foundation. This report showed that from the time of the corporation's inception the cause of labor, organized and open, had been losing; that working hours had been lengthened and that the wage increase boasted of had fallen below the increase in the cost of living. The steel trust was not organized for the benefit of its employees, Mr. Gary notwithstanding.—Indianapolis News.

A Washington dispatch refers to the wishes of the "southern Republicans"—meaning, of course, the little handful of federal office holders in the south.

Defenders of Tariff of 1909.

The tariff act of 1909 has been investigated by several competent and disinterested persons. The results of their investigations may be found in Miss Tarbell's "Tariff in Our Own Times," in Professor Taussig's "Tariff History of the United States," in Professor Cozart's "Industrial History of the United States," and in various magazine articles of importance, including Prof. Willis' articles in the Journal of Political Economy, and an exceptionally thorough study in the Review of Reviews.

All of these investigators agree that the revision was farcical.

The only defenses of the act have come from such sources as members of the ways and means committee and the wool trust, which prints an elaborate puff of schedule K in the current issue of the Outlook—as an advertisement.

Competition Eliminated.

The eleventh-hour resolution of the Steel Trust to divest itself of a part of its ore holdings was a confession of guilt. The Steel Trust dominates the markets for billets and other basic steel products, rails, steel plates, tinplate, wire, and structural iron as completely as the oil trust dominates the market for petroleum and its various derivatives. Petroleum prices are fixed by a few men, who meet occasionally in a tall building on lower Broadway; steel prices are discussed and arranged at Gary dinners. Competition has absolutely nothing to do with the matter; it is completely eliminated.—Philadelphia Record.

Kindred Gloom.

Says the Chinese emperor in an imperial edict:

"I have reigned three years, and have always acted conscientiously in the interests of the people. But I have not employed men properly, as I am without political skill. I have employed too many nobles in official positions. The people are grumbling, yet I do not know. Disasters loom ahead, but I do not see."

Of what other distinguished heads of a government do these utterances remind you?

Art Anachronism.

"It is generally acknowledged that the most brilliant light cavalry officer the nation has ever produced was Oliver Cromwell. It is, therefore, peculiarly unfortunate—but it is nevertheless a fact—on the statue of the Protector, which stands outside Westminster hall the spurs are represented as attached to the boots upside down! Further, the left spur is on the right foot, and the right is on the left, while it is insisted by the best experts that the spurs are not of the period."—Bargain Book.

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Mrs. C. M. Dowler of Johannesburg, Mich., writes:—"Sloan's Liniment is the best medicine in the world. It has relieved me of Neuralgia. These pains have all gone and I can truly say your Liniment did stop them."

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There are still plenty of green pastures for all the Lord's sheep.

In Strange Company.

The Visitor—And what is that great stone structure over there?

The Courier—Zat sees ze armory for ze soldiers.

The Visitor—Ah, yes. And that long, low building that looks like a train shed—what is that?

The Courier—Zat sees ze arsenal.

The Visitor—I see, and what is the big factory with the immense smokestack?

The Courier—Zat sees ze great iron works where is made ze big gun an' ze shot an' ze shell.

The Visitor—And that peculiar looking structure across the river—the one with the rounded roof?

The Courier—Zat sees ze powder magazine.

The Visitor—And what is this magnificent marble structure with its wonderful dome and countless columns?

The Courier—Oh, zat sees ze palace of peace!—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Representative Henry of Texas, in an eloquent and witty attack on international marriages, said the other day in Waco:

"The Honorable Maude Laclands, the little daughter of the Earl of Laclands and ze Chicago pork queen, once asked her mother, 'Mamma, how long does a honeymoon last?'"

"Lady Laclands with a bitter smile made answer."

"The honeymoon may be said to last, my dear, until your husband begins to pester you for money."

A BRAIN WORKER.

Nourishes Brain.

"I am a literary man whose nervous energy is a great part of my stock in trade, and ordinarily I have little patience with breakfast foods and the extravagant claims made of them. But I cannot withhold my acknowledgment of the debt that I owe to Grape-Nuts food."

"I discovered long ago that the very bulkiness of the ordinary diet was not calculated to give one a clear head, the power of sustained, accurate thinking. I always felt heavy and sluggish in mind as well as body after eating the ordinary meal, which diverted the blood from the brain to the digestive apparatus."

"I tried foods easy of digestion, but found them usually deficient in nutriment. I experimented with many breakfast foods and they, too, proved unsatisfactory, till I reached Grape-Nuts. And then the problem was solved."

"Grape-Nuts" agreed with me perfectly from the beginning, satisfying my hunger and supplying the nutriment that so many other prepared foods lack."

"I had not been using it very long before I found that I was turning out an unusual quantity and quality of work. Continued use has demonstrated to my entire satisfaction that Grape-Nuts food contains the elements needed by the brain and nervous system of the hard working public writer." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

"There's a reason," and it is explained in the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in plinks.

Ever read the above letter? A new use appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Case of the Bitter Bitten

Amusing Transaction in Counterfeit Bills and Smuggled Opium Takes Place in Manila.

The city secret service is still zealously investigating the operations of the gang of counterfeiters recently gathered in, and each day brings a new discovery of some activity of the gang and the uncovering of more of their paraphernalia.

Behind the story of the arrest is a tale, told by one of the alleged counterfeiters, which contradicts the old saying about there being honor even among thieves.

The counterfeit money was not a particularly good imitation of the 20 peso bills turned out by the government, and realizing its deficiencies, its makers hit upon the plan of buying opium with it, instead of distrib-

take time to analyze the dope when I get it. The main idea is to get away with the goods without being caught.

"Just before you got us I went out aboard a steamer and bought a can. I had the money wadded up—200 pesos it was, in phony money. I pushed the wad to the Chinese and he as quickly handed me the can."

Here the man smiled at the recollection. "I suppose he examined the money afterward. I know I examined what was in the can."

Here he paused, and one of the sleuths asked, "What was in the can? Did you get stung, too?"

"Seguro. The can was filled with strup!"—Manila Times.

At His Subscriptions.

She—And you are a strict vegetarian? He—Oh, yes.

Oh, what a vegetarian? Oh, I've been running a country newspaper for twenty-five years!—Yonkers Statesman.